Claims:

1. A compound comprising a peptidic vector and at least one fluorescein dye, wherein the peptidic vector comprises the amino acid sequence X_3-G-D, wherein the peptidic vector and the fluorescein dyes are coupled, and wherein

X_3 represents arginine, N-methylarginine or an arginine mimetic,

G represents glycine,

D represents aspartic acid,

or a physiologically acceptable salt thereof.

2. A compound as claimed in claim 1 given by formula I,

$$R_a\text{-}C(=O)\text{-}X_1\text{-}X_2\text{-}X_3\text{-}G\text{-}D\text{-}X_4\text{-}X_5\text{-}X_6\text{-}X_7 \quad (I)$$

comprising two cyclising bridges,

wherein X_3, G and D are defined as in claim 1, and wherein

R_a represents $-(CH_2)_n-$ or $-(CH_2)_n-C_6H_4-$ forming a bridge to either X_2, X_4 or X_6, wherein

n represents a positive integer from 1 to 10, and

X_1 represents a bond or 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 amino acid residues, wherein one amino acid residue is optionally functionalised with a spacer moiety, or said amino acid residue possesses a functional side-chain such as an acid or amine group,

X_2 and X_4 represent independently amino acid residues capable of forming a cyclising bridge,

X_5 represents a hydrophobic amino acid or derivatives thereof, and

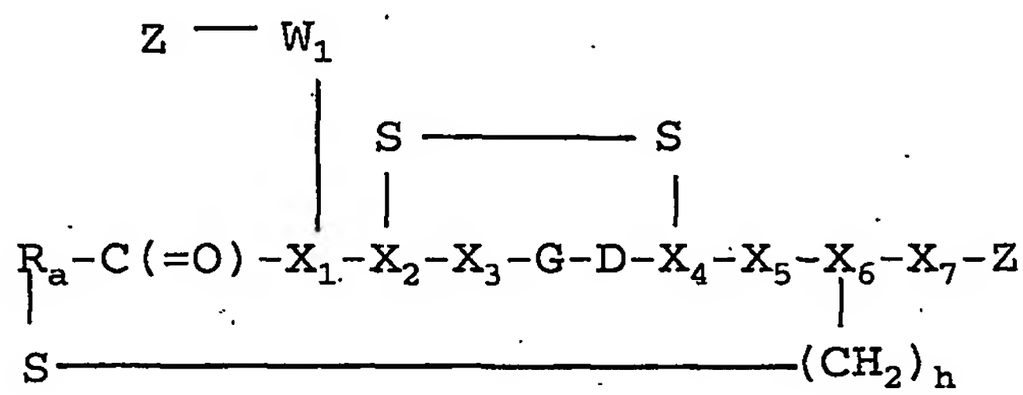
X_6 represents an amino acid residue capable of forming a cyclising bridge, and

X_7 represents a spacer or biomodifier moiety or is absent,

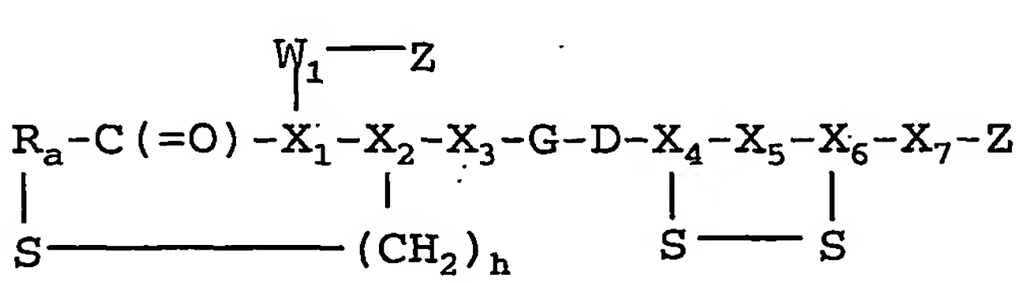
and,

the compound further comprising at least one group Z, representing a fluorescein dye, linked to one or more of the groups X_1, X_6 or X_7 optionally via a spacer group.

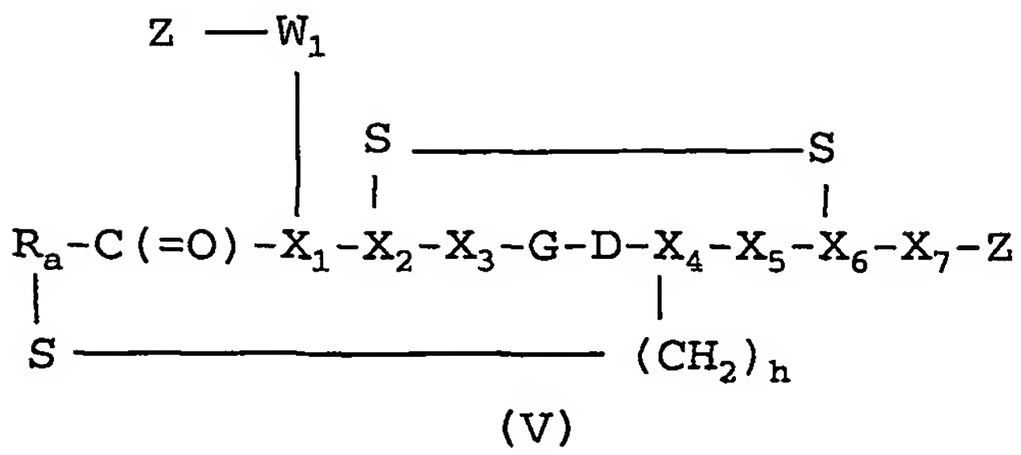
3. A compound as claimed in claim 2 selected from one of the formulas;



(III)



(IV)



(V)

wherein R_a, X_1, X_3, G, D, X_5, and X_7 are as defined in claims 1 and 2 and wherein

X_2, X_4 and X_6 represent amino acid residues capable of forming a disulphide or a thioether bond,

W_1 is a spacer moiety or is absent,

h is a positive integer 1 or 2,

and wherein at least one of the Z groups is present representing a fluorescein dye.

4. A compound of formula III as claimed in claim 3 wherein R_a represents $-(CH_2)-$.

5. A compound of formula III as claimed in any of claims 3 or 4 wherein X_1 represents an amino acid residue with a functional side-chain such as an acid or amine group, the amino acid being selected from aspartic acid, lysine, glutamic acid, homolysine or a diaminoalcylic acid or derivatives thereof.

6. A compound of formula III as claimed in any of claims 3 to 5 wherein X_2, X_4 and X_6 independently represent a cysteine or homocysteine residue.

7. A compound of formula III as claimed in any of claims 3 to 6 wherein X_3 represents arginine.

8. A compound of formula III as claimed in any of claims 3 to 7 wherein X_5 represents phenylalanine, tyrosine, a 3-iodo-tyrosine or naphthylalanine.

9. A compound of formula III as claimed in any of claims 3 to 8 wherein X_7 comprises 1-10 units of a monodisperse PEG building block or is absent.

10. A pharmaceutical composition comprising an effective amount of a compound of any of the previous claims, together with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable adjuvants, excipients or diluents.

11. Compounds of any of claims 1 to 9 for use as an optical imaging contrast agent.

12. Use of a compound as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 9 in the manufacture of an optical imaging contrast agent for use in a method of diagnosis involving administering said contrast agent to a human or animal body and generating an image of at least part of said body.

13. A method of generating images of a human or animal body by optical imaging involving administering a contrast agent to said body, and generating an image of at least a part of said body to which said contrast agent has distributed, characterized in that said contrast agent comprises a compound as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 9.